

Timely River Forecast Spares Hospital Evacuation

“If it weren’t for NOAA’s NWS river forecasts and close coordination with hospital officials, Lourde’s Hospital would have been closed”.

Background

Because soils were already saturated over the middle atlantic and northeast states, when steady rain fell in those areas again on April 2-3, the rain had no where to go. One to three inches of rain fell from Virginia to New England, with as much as five inches of rain reported in the Catskill Mountains in New

York and in the Pocono and Endless Mountains in northeastern Pennsylvania. The heavy rainfall combined with a melting snow pack produced flooding across parts of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New England.

Major river and small stream flooding occurred in south-central New York and north-central Pennsylvania with widespread moderate to major flooding across the eastern Catskill region of New York.

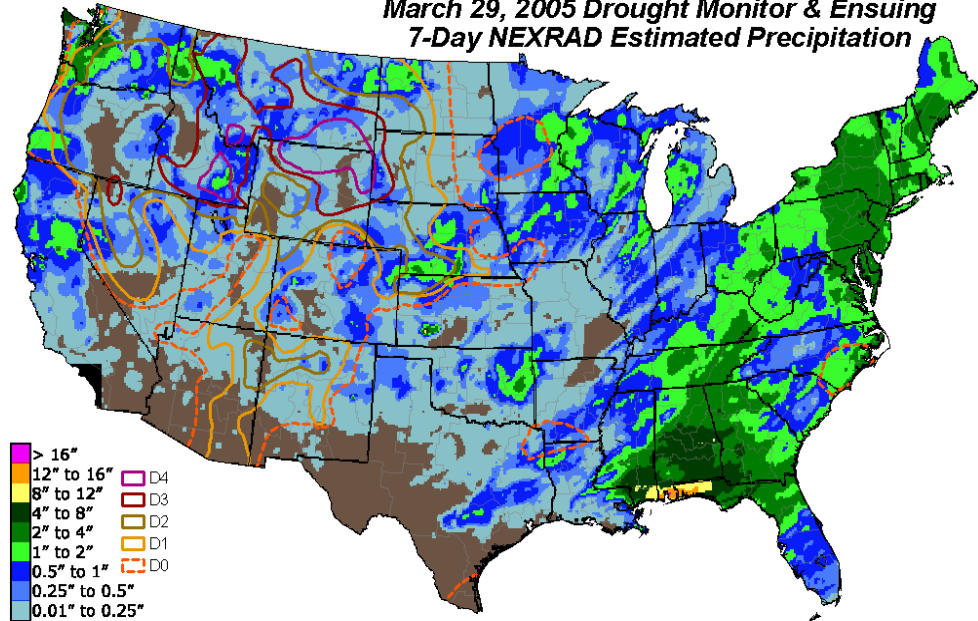
AHPS River Flood Forecasts Save Hospital in Binghamton, NY

On Friday morning, April 1st, [NOAA’s National Weather Service \(NWS\)](#), Warning Coordination Meteorologist from the [Binghamton forecast office](#); Dave Nicosia briefed Broome County, New York Emergency Services and the Emergency Coordinator for Lourde’s Hospital that the Susquehanna River in Binghamton would crest between 20-21 feet Sunday.

“We were concerned the river would flood. If they have to evacuate, they have to move people to the two other hospitals,” state Nicosia.

These river forecasts were based on the NWS [Middle Atlantic](#)

March 29, 2005 Drought Monitor & Ensuing 7-Day NEXRAD Estimated Precipitation



Binghamton WFO Warning Coordination Meteorologist Dave Nicosia

[River Forecast Center's Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Services](#) for the Susquehanna River.

At 19 feet, the Susquehanna River floods the hospital's basement, cutting off its power supply. This would have forced Lourde's Hospital to evacuate hundreds of patients to the two other area hospitals. As a result of this river forecast, a 6 foot high sand and earth berm was built to protect the hospital from the waters. The berm held as the Susquehanna River at Binghamton crested at 20.7 feet Sunday evening averting a mass evacuation of the hospital's patients. It was reported later that this forecast saved the county at least \$2 million by not having to evacuate the hospital and associated property damage.



Broome County, NY
Emergency Services
Director Mike Aswad

Broome County Emergency Services Director Mike Aswad stated, *"If it weren't for NOAA's NWS river forecasts and close coordination with hospital officials, Lourde's Hospital would have been closed"*.

Flood watches were issued by 16 forecast offices in the NWS Eastern Region two days before the event. Preliminary lead times for Flood Warnings ranged from 2 to 8 hours. Preliminary lead times for River Flood Warnings for major river flooding on the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers ranged from 24 to 60 hours.